

Toad and Diamonds by Heather Tomlinson

Lesson plan by Maria Emmons

Students would compare and contrast the lessons of the novel with the original fairy tale. They would think about the purpose of each story, the audience, and how Ms. Tomlinson changed the story to fit a more modern audience.

1. Students have read “Toads and Diamonds” by Heather Tomlinson. They would write down Diribani’s and Tana’s behavior that got the goddess’ blessing, what their gift was, and how that gift ended up helping other people.
2. Students would evaluate the gifts to see if both were indeed gifts. Tana spends much of the story feeling she has insulted the goddess and is therefore cursed. Is she really or is that in her mind? Is Diribani’s “gift” really such a blessing? What does this say about the nature of gifts or the way wishes are fulfilled?
3. Students then would read the Perrault fairy tale “Le Fees”. They would compare the two novels and make a hypothesis as to why things were changed in the book. Did the stepsisters get along in the fairy tale? book? why the change? Was one gift a blessing and one a curse? Why did the fairy react differently in the tale? Why did Tomlinson change the setting? Change the fairy into a goddess? How does the fairy tale leave out aspects of these gifts like the feeling of jewels pouring out of your mouth?
4. Think about other fairy tales that have been changed or adapted by Disney or modern culture. Why do we keep returning to fairy tales? Why not make new fairy tales? Why do we update the settings and culture?
5. For a final project, students would pick their own fairy tale to change. They don’t need to rewrite the story as a novel, but after reading the fairy tale, they would think about changing the setting, character relationships, the moral, etc. We would try to find tales that aren’t as popular to expose ourselves to stories beyond Cinderella, etc. We might even try to find Russian, Japanese, or other cultural fairy tales which might be similar to ours.